



Paris Basin, France: Interregional Cooperation

A Contribution by the Regions of the Paris Basin to the Future Trans-European Transport Network Policy



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I. PREAMBULE:

- **Interregional cooperation to serve TEN-T**

The Paris Basin is home to 25 million inhabitants and lies at a crossroads where international passenger and freight transport flows interlace on land, as those from the Iberian Peninsula, Benelux and Eastern Europe, or at sea as those observed in Le Havre, a gateway to the European Union, notably for Asian traffic flows.

Following the observation that the thirty priority projects identified under the TEN-T 2004 revised guidelines are not specifically relevant to their geographical area in the Union, the eight Regions forming the Paris Basin¹ have agreed on the need to act jointly in order for the Paris Basin to be factored into the future committed programmes developing the European Transport Network (post 2013).

This would indeed contribute towards enhanced attractiveness of the Basin area regions as well as represent, for the European Union as a whole, enhanced guarantees towards accessibility and the strengthening of social, economic and territorial cohesion, whilst encompassing environmental and sustainable development requirements.

These eight Regions have thus progressively intensified their research and pooled both means and resources required to organise their interregional co-operation scheme at the Paris Basin scale.

They are currently promoting a project called “**Maillon ouest**” that should progressively create a multimodal transport system designed for passengers and freight.

- **Necessary involvement of Paris Basin Regions in the development of the TEN-T programme**

For over two years now, in addition to being in contact with the French State, the Paris Basin Regions have been in close cooperation with the European Institutions on a political and technical level through bi-lateral meetings, conferences and position papers.

This contribution to the public consultation, aimed at **defining the criteria and funding instruments for the future TEN-T network**, fits fully within this approach.

Through their contribution to the public debate organised following the publication in April 2009², of the Green Paper on the future of the TEN-T, the Paris Basin Regions expressed

¹ Ile de France, Haute Normandie, Basse Normandie, Picardie, Bourgogne, Centre, Champagne Ardenne and Pays de Loire. The Conference of the 8 Presidents (C8) of the Paris Basin Region is the decision-making body involved in the inter-regional co-operation endeavor.

² Contribution by the Paris Basin Regions to the European Commission Green Paper on the future of the TEN-T, issued in April 2009, pages 4, 6, 7 and 10.

their interest in the dual-layer approach consisting in one “comprehensive network” and one “core network”. The Regions indicated in particular that:

- 1) *“...The Paris Basin Regions shared the assessment made by the European Commission that the existing approach per priority project, focused solely on major traffic flows and particularly cross-border ones, shall fail to constitute an efficient Trans-European Transport Network,”*
- 2) *“...The Paris Basin Regions felt that a novel approach would allow the following:*
 - *To include those transport infrastructure nodes which are blockages jeopardising good connections between routes and good traffic flows...*
 - *To identify ports as first level points of entry into the Trans-European Network, in particular the port of Le Havre ... as it builds up towards Port 2000 and is destined to become a first tier trans-continental hub. It thereby becomes essential for short sea shipping along the Channel, Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic façades.*
 - *To seek continuity with and between the existing priority projects with the support of the existing infrastructure network, or infrastructure to be developed through contracts signed between the State and various French Regions.”*
- 3) *“... In view of the growing share in infrastructure programme funding borne by the Regions, the Paris Basin Regions reaffirmed the need to involve the Regions in designing and programming the future TEN-T... The Regions deemed it essential to reform governance procedures applicable to infrastructure projects in order to effectively implement the orientations of the future TEN-T ...and would see their role made legitimate along that of the Member States”.*

- **"Maillon ouest" to be incorporated into a dual layer planning approach.**

The public consultation in April 2009 enabled the European Commission to produce a dual layer planning approach:

- With a “core network” as the top layer, which would include routes and nodes of vital importance for transport flows within the Single Market and between the EU, its neighbours and other parts of the world; and
- With a “comprehensive network” made up of existing networks of fairly dense rail, road, inland waterways, ports and airports, which, because of its interlinked nature, guarantees access to the “core network”.

The Paris Basin Regions greet positively the fact that the European Commission has preferred this option when reviewing the TEN-T policy and when preparing for the White Paper on the Future Transport Policy.

The "Maillon ouest" project indeed has a fundamental role in this dual layer approach. (See description of “Maillon ouest” Project, April 2009, in particular maps appended to this here document).

This project has already been presented twice in Brussels³. The information contained in this contribution amply illustrates once again how this approach by the European Commission is sound and presents a wealth of options.

With this in mind, the Paris Basin Regions deploy great efforts to stimulate further genuine European dynamism by involving other local and regional authorities, operators and users and substantiate the advantages associated with the fact that their projects should be taken into account and implemented in the context of the future TEN-T.

³ - On 8 July 2009 during a technical seminar to introduce project, in particular in the presence of the European Commission, the Permanent Representation of France to the European Union and representatives from other European Regions; and

- On 30 September 2009, during a meeting of the Presidents of the Paris Basin Regions and EU Transport Commissioner Antonio TAJANI.

II. ANSWER TO CONSULTATION

1. The planning method

Are the principles and criteria for designing the core network, as set out, adequate and practicable? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what else could be taken into account?

To what extent do the supplementary infrastructure measures contribute to the objectives of a future-oriented transport system?

What specific role could TEN-T planning in general play in boosting the transport sector's contribution to the "Europe 2020" strategic objectives?

- **Territorial cohesion: major assessment criterion**

As the Lisbon Treaty came into force on December 1st, 2009, territorial cohesion became a new political objective for the European Union, along with social and economic cohesion.

As a political objective, territorial cohesion must apply horizontally across all of the European Union's policies.

Thus, the concept of territorial cohesion has become a requirement to be factored into TEN-T planning criteria, in order for the infra-national level to be taken into account better for a greater coherent development of a Community railway network.

Territorial cohesion has therefore become a common issue as well as a responsibility shared between the European Union, the Member States, the Local Authorities and the networks of stakeholders from civil society.

This dual level network concept therefore calls for planning the "comprehensive network" by an enhanced integration of territorial cohesion in order to guarantee access to the "core network".

In terms of planning, the "Maillon ouest" project is specifically aligned with:

- **The dual level concept of a "core network" and a "comprehensive network"; and**
 - **The horizontal approach intended to strengthen Europe's territorial cohesion, as it complies with the cross-border, maritime and environmental objectives set by the "Europe 2020" strategy in order to guarantee global coherence of all European policies.**
-
- **"Comprehensive network" and "core network" design criteria**

To design the TEN-T as a “core network” and a “comprehensive network” would allow the following:

- Make the TEN-T policy more tangible and give priority to projects which focus on railways, ports, waterways (maritime and inland) and their roads links with the hinterland;
- Guarantee an access function to the “core network” via the “comprehensive network” since the latter is made up of links which come mostly from existing national networks;
- Define the contours of the “core network” by ranking all existing and foreseeable European Union corridors, then by applying this to the “comprehensive network” Identified.

It is in this context that the Paris Basin Regions highlight the following:

- The “comprehensive network”:
 - The “comprehensive network” must inter-connect all of the EU regions. It must be **multimodal** and supply the basic infrastructure for inter-modal passengers and freight transport services;
 - The “comprehensive network” must be shaped by a selection of links and nodes, and by dealing with bottlenecks and conurbation by-paths, assessed according to clearly defined criteria that allow for “**European added value**”. This presupposes:
 - A previous definition of the “European added value”, by harmonising the socio-economic assessment methods used to compare projects;
 - A clear segregation between passenger and freight flows in terms of infrastructures and services.
- The “core network”:

In line with the « Europe 2020 » strategy, one of the main objectives must be to **promote modal shift particularly in favour of rail freight and inland-waterways**, in order to promote a decarbonised transport sector, and to answer the European agenda set in terms of climate change.

In this context, the following should be borne in mind:

- Taking account of the fact that **certain land corridors are maritime in essence** and serve as the basic route for the priority network. This applies to railway haulage of freight connected to maritime transport via trains linked to the main intermodal transport nodes likely to process long trains (750 to 1000 meters, or longer);
- Ensuring an efficient connection to the TEN-T network, of the hinterland as well as the railway and waterway systems of specific ports and logistic platforms that process the majority of European freight exchanges outside the EU and could increase their involvement in intra-European exchanges;

- **Developing motorways of the sea**, which constitute a flexible alternative, respectful of the environment whilst promoting integration of isolated and peripheral regions; and
- **Identifying creative solutions for tracking freight and for freight safety and security**, which would foster improved competitiveness and growth of the EU.

The Maillon ouest Project promoted by the Paris Basin Regions is particularly aligned with the new transport thrust that the EU wishes to impart, as is clearly demonstrated by the two maps appended to this contribution. More specifically, it is clear that:

- The « Channel Germany » and « Benelux France Spain » corridors could become building blocks for the “core network” within the EU;
- The “Atlantic Switzerland” corridor could be located on the EU’s “comprehensive network”; and
- The North and South bypasses around Paris could also be located on this EU “comprehensive network”.

The proposal to develop this new Maillon ouest of the TEN-T is all the more relevant since it is sustained by corridors of European breadth and of acknowledged growth potential. In parallel, this Maillon ouest also offers real opportunities to tap into the corridors feeding South East Mediterranean destinations. In summary, the Maillon ouest project promoted by the Paris Basin Regions should be viewed in relation to the possibilities it offers, undoubtedly associated with its implementation: to decongest historically used corridors and ports; and to improve territorial cohesion within the European space.

2. Implementation of the TEN-T

In which way can the different sources of EU expenditure be better coordinated and/or combined in order to accelerate the delivery of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?

How can an EU funding strategy coordinate and/or combine the different sources of EU and national funding and public and private financing?

Would the setting up of a European funding framework adequately address the implementation gap in the completion of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?

To be fully operational and efficient, a strategy should be established in close partnership with the Regions. This will ensure greater coherence and robust links with the local and regional planning schemes.

- **Towards stronger integrated action at EU level**

The EU position must first and foremost be acknowledged as central, because of its planning capacity particularly of the “core network”, for which the EU must “*accelerate the implementation of strategic projects with high European added value to address critical*”

bottlenecks, in particular cross border sections and inter modal nodes (cities, ports, logistic platforms)”⁴ ;

In addition, in 2009, the Paris Basin Regions had stated in particular that *“the TEN-T’s future orientations [...] should support the links required between financial arrangements connected to TEN-T and investment decisions made in the context of other European policies, particularly for ports (see example of ERDF contribution in port estates)”*.⁵

These links could be established by strengthening the executive body and / or its European coordinators, and / or instituting specific dedicated task forces within the European Commission.

The creation of an integrated funding framework would thus prove all the more efficient if it included all the cohesion policy tools and were connected to the economic and technical frame that the EU will set for:

- **traffic pricing and regulation**, particularly through internalisation of external costs, thereby promoting the use that freight operators would make of sustainable transport modes such as rail or maritime transport (Eurovignette);
- **improvement of transport quality and safety**, particularly through the development of railway interoperability.

Even though the importance of planning managed at a European scale is acknowledged, choices made to plan the “comprehensive network” must move beyond the restricted realm of bi-lateral discussions between Member States.

This dovetails with the territorial cohesion objective explained above, in particular to help strengthen partnerships with local authorities. More specifically, the Europe 2020 strategy indicates that: *“By establishing a permanent dialogue between various levels of government, the priorities of the Union are brought closer to citizens, strengthening the ownership needed to deliver the Europe 2020 strategy.”*⁶ Thus, for this strategy to be successful, all local and regional authorities will need to be actively involved once it becomes translated into all of the EU’s sectoral policies.

The Paris Basin Regions share these views and had expressed them in 2009 by stating that: *“the TEN-T’s future orientations foster the conditions to truly associate the Regions when defining the TEN-T networks, since these said Regions act increasingly outside the scope of their competences as co-funders of transport infrastructure in addition to, or in lieu of, the State.”*

This **process of cooperation and permanent dialogue** of those stakeholders and decision makers involved in territorial development will need to be implemented with each TEN-T project and, at the very least, in terms of its coordination and funding sources.

⁴COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION. EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Brussels, 3 March 2010, COM(2010) 2020, page 15.

⁵. Contribution by the Paris Basin Regions to the European Commission Green Paper on the future of the TEN-T, issued in April 2009, page 11.

⁶ COMMUNICATION FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION. EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, Brussels, 3 March 2010, COM(2010) 2020, page 29.

- **Funding coordination⁷**

The eight Regions of the Paris Basin suggest exploring the opportunity that funding coordination be done by establishing an integrated funding framework. It would include options to contract with the Member States as well as with their territorial authorities, or even with a grouping of both involved in a joint project.

This arrangement would constitute the prerequisite for genuine co-ordination, and would be developed further by the creation of project companies dedicated to infrastructure construction for each freight corridors.

This would allow establishing trans-national consortia better able to:

- Integrate interoperability requirements;
- Drive projects in compliance with costs and lead times;
- Establish cost sharing on the basis of common usefulness and not geographic location;
- Exclude from enforcement of the “Maastricht criteria” all investments made by the States and their managers to finance such projects;
- Allow infrastructure managing establishments to make an attractive commercial offer on trans-European points of origin / destinations.

These consortia would take on construction and maintenance of such infrastructures for a period of time to be established. They would be compensated by rent payments from the infrastructure managers.

In all cases, majority shares in those potential partner consortia would always be held by public representation.

These consortia would include:

- The European Commission;
- The relevant States, their public establishments managing those infrastructures, and those local authorities most involved financially and geographically;
- The European Investment Bank, which could potentially be the operator of a major European loan to finance the TEN-T project; and
- Private partners convening together as a joint-liability group, to include construction and logistics companies as the successful bidders of construction works projects.

Selection of these private partners would be through a public procurement procedure on the basis of:

- Infrastructure construction cost, to be paid by the project company; and
- Minimum commitments in terms of freight traffic and transport mode(s) as alternatives to road transport.

The minimum basic rent payment to be paid by infrastructure managing establishments would be set according to the two criteria above.

The advantage of this solution is its dissimilarity with public/private partnerships or concessions, whilst dissociating clearly

- project costs from
- funding means, and from
- fair shareholder retribution.

⁷ The content of this paragraph does not gain a total consensus between the regions of the C8, especially if these proposals were to lead, on the one hand, to States curtailing their responsibility to fund transport infrastructure and, on the other, to fragmented network coherence at national levels.

III. Appendix 1: Maps of the Maillon ouest's three corridors

1. Map no. 1: C8's view of the priority freight corridors

Map no. 1 shows the three corridors. It describes the C8's view of the three major priority routes, also called "central" routes to be developed for heavy haulage transport. It also proposes other "comprehensive" routes to come in addition to the core network. These routes are ingress and egress points to and from mainland Europe. They connect with the main "deep sea" and / or "short sea" routes feeding into the European Union. This map does not discriminate between rail mode and river mode which both overlap on several portions of the routes' links.

The "Channel - Germany" corridor connects the European ingress/egress point of Le Havre port to Southern and Central Germany via the Paris region. On both these routes, these two heavy haulage transport modes (rail and river) can play a major direct or complementary role: river haulage is used between Le Havre and a large gauge platform on the Seine River, and rail haulage is used between this platform and the origin / destination in Germany or in Northern Italy, to avoid road and rail congestion of the Paris node. This corridor also offers an additional North bypass around the Paris node, available to the rail mode.

The "Benelux - France - Spain" corridor connects the Benelux ports to the Paris area, to the French Atlantic Arc and to the Spanish Basque Country via the Pyrenees' Atlantic border. This corridor is already integrated within the Central European Network with, in its Northern segment the Seine River - North Europe canal project and in its Southern segment a project to build a rail motorway between Paris and the Spanish border. This corridor also offers a South bypass option around the Paris node available to the rail mode. The latter is also used to inter-connect the Northern range ports, and Le Havre port to the markets of Northern France and Belgium.

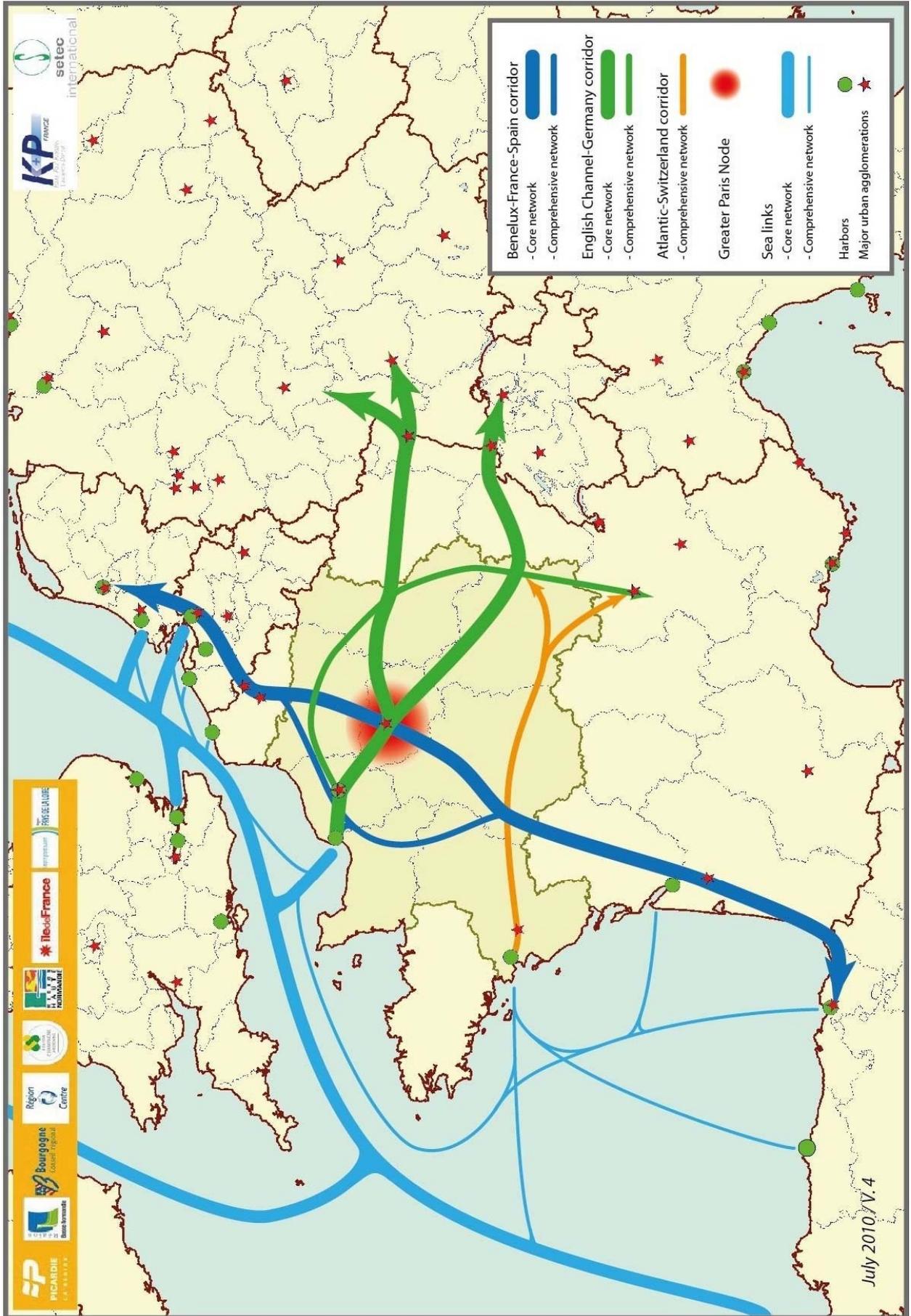
The "Atlantic - Switzerland" corridor connects the port of Nantes St. Nazaire to Switzerland. It is mainly a rail corridor, integrated within the global European network. Its objective is to offer another option to companies from the regions traversed, e.g. Burgundy or Rhône-Alpes, and to the Swiss regions, by connecting them to the Northern and Southern range ports.

2. Map no. 2: The 3 corridors within the European network

Map no. 2 demonstrates how the 3 corridors suggested by the C8 fit within the European project as it stands today. Clearly visible is the fact that the Eastern branch of the Channel – Germany corridor is already integrated within the TEN-T networks, as well as the Benelux – France - Spain Northern branch. **The essential element added to the "core" network is the Le Havre port – Paris – Southern Germany route.** The other major routes of these corridors have been added to the European "comprehensive" network.

Corridors analysed within the framework of the "Maillon Ouest" project

Map no. 1



Map no. 2

The "Maillon Ouest" within the TEN-T priority projects network

